



Dark Nights For Mutual Aid & Solidarity

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Brief statement about the insurrection in Indonesia and the subsequent repression

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The following statement by [Palang Hitam / ABC Indonesia](#) was broadcast on air Monday, December 9th / between 11am - 1pm CET on [Radio Blackout](#). The name of the show is "bello come una prigioniera che brucia" (Beautiful as a Burning Prison), a show broadcast since 20 years against prisons, repression, surveillance, military tech and AI. Radio Blackout is an autonomous radio (FM in Turin, Italy, and streaming elsewhere) born in 1992 as common project self managed by local squats, social centers and various collectives and individuals (antifa, anti authoritarian, anticapitalist, anti lots of things, with comrades from different areas of anarchism and communism).

From August to early September 2025, Indonesia was hit by demonstrations and riots triggered by public anger over government policies that were considered detrimental to the people. The main triggers of these protests were drastic increases in the cost of living, including food prices and education costs, as well as mass layoffs that affected many workers. In addition, increases in land and building taxes imposed by local governments as a result of funding cuts from the central government further exacerbated the situation. Public frustration peaked when there were proposals to increase the allowances and salaries of members of the House of Representatives (DPR) which seemed to ignore the suffering of the people.

Initially, public anger was only expressed on social media with calls to dissolve the House of Representatives. However, the response from members of the House of Representatives, especially Ahmad Sahroni, who called the critics "the dumbest people in the world," only worsened the

situation. On August 25, the anger erupted in the form of a massive demonstration in front of the House of Representatives office, which ended in chaos with clashes between demonstrators and the police.

This first demonstration was attended by various elements of society, such as online motorcycle taxi drivers, vocational school students, and members of the general public who were not affiliated with any particular organization. Although the posters they made were ridiculed by some pro-democracy activists for being poorly designed and therefore likely to have been "made by intelligence agents," the protests continued. Their demands focused on the elimination of allowances for members of the House of Representatives, which were considered too wasteful, the passing of the Asset Seizure Bill, and the rejection of a number of other controversial bills.

On August 26-27, demonstrations continued despite a decline in the number of participants. Many students began to hold open discussions, showing that the issue of the House of Representatives was gaining public attention. However, riots broke out again on August 28, when labor demonstrations in various major cities demanded an increase in the minimum wage, the abolition of the outsourcing system, and changes to the Manpower Act. In Jakarta, labor protests in front of the House of Representatives building and the State Palace ended in riots, which escalated after an online motorcycle taxi driver named Affan Kurniawan was killed when he was hit by an armored police vehicle in Pejompongan, Central Jakarta. This incident was captured on video and went viral, sparking further outrage.

Since early August 29, online motorcycle taxi drivers have gathered at the Kwitang Mobile Brigade Headquarters, demanding justice for Affan's death and holding the police accountable for the violence against demonstrators. The crowd grew, including students, and the demonstration shifted to police stations and government buildings. However, despite negotiations, the crowd was dissatisfied with the results, and riots broke out again, causing public transportation to come to a standstill and several stations to close.

The riots spread to various major cities outside Jakarta. There were 34 other flashpoints outside Jakarta where public facilities, police stations, and local council buildings were set on fire by the mob. On August 30-31, tensions escalated after it was revealed that several members of the House of Representatives, including Ahmad Sahroni, were abroad. This news further fueled public anger, which led to the storming of the homes of Sahroni and several other members of the House of Representatives, as well as government officials such as Finance

Minister Sri Mulyani. Their homes were looted by a crowd that could no longer contain their anger.

That night, the power went out around the Mobile Brigade Headquarters, and police forces deployed to control the riots used tear gas and gunfire to disperse the crowd. The armed forces and police conducted sweeps in various areas to crack down on the rioters. This crackdown continued in the following days, causing tensions to rise throughout Indonesia. The Indonesian government labeled the demonstrators with accusations ranging from terrorism to treason. Instead of meeting the demands during the demonstrations, the Indonesian government responded with continued repression and a retreat from democratization.

This popular uprising was essentially driven by ordinary people, particularly high school students, the unemployed, and the online motorcycle taxi community—forces that had been underestimated and considered “politically unaware” by middle-class activists and most leftists. These rebels are not people who act based on their reading of Marxist or anarchist books. They are on the streets because the information circulating on social media has provoked their anger; anger that is then moderated by the middle class shouting “don’t destroy public facilities,” “don’t be anarchists,” “don’t be provoked,” and finally: making a series of long-winded demands called “17+8” on September 1 just to extinguish the fire and anger (the demands “17+8” that have never been realized until today). It is true that the mob still lack practical intelligence. But of course that is not their fault. Since they are the people who have always been sacrificed by the state and even by the opposition elites who claim to be “revolutionaries”—they have grown up with the understanding that anger must find an outlet.

Then, when the fires stopped burning everywhere, when the rulers and political elites apologized in public, no one could say for sure how it all began. There had been a lot of consolidation, discussion, cross-ideological networking, political campaigns, etc.; but what happened in August 2025 was a festival of insurrection that no one could have predicted. Even when the demonstrations first began, until the death of Affan Kurniawan as the boiling point of public anger, these demonstrations were still seen as “staged demonstrations” for the benefit of those in power, which, ironically, were promoted massively by most middle-class pro-democracy activists and their followers.

Now, after the riots, the police have arrested many people, including anarchists egoist/nihilists, but most of them are victims of wrongful arrest who did not even participate in the demonstrations. They are accused of being masterminds, provocateurs, intellectual actors, and are

labeled as "groups of chaos stars." Meanwhile, the members of DPR such as Ahmad Sahroni, who sparked public outrage, remain in office and have not been dismissed. Recently, the DPR passed a revision to the Criminal Procedure Code that allows police officers to arrest people without evidence and to secretly wiretap, record, and tamper with digital devices.

Palang Hitam / ABC Indonesia

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